

Honors English I Summer Reading 2019-2020

Students and Parents of incoming freshman,

Honors English I is a rigorous study of grammar, literature and composition which creates a foundation for Advancement Placement English classes. English Honors and AP courses contain a challenging curriculum and students must be self disciplined and willing to adhere to a high standard of excellence in their coursework.

The curriculum consists of reading classical and contemporary literature, writing literary analyses, and reading and analyzing more than one piece of work at the same time. In addition, students must master the English I TEKS and pass the EOC given in the spring. **Students must demonstrate a thorough work ethic, responsibility for their assignments and learn from mistakes in order to succeed in this class.** Honors English courses are based upon college-level work and sometimes the reading material contains mature language, content or themes. If you find this objectionable, you may want to reconsider Honors classes. To be successful in this class, students must have mastered the 8th grade Reading STAAR test and have passed ELA and Reading courses in the prior year with an 80 or above (90 is preferred).

Before entering the Honors English I class, students must complete a summer reading assignment which consists of reading and annotating two novels.

In order to complete the Honors English I summer assignment, students must obtain two books:

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak and

Night by Ellie Wiesel.

The annotated novels should be brought to school on the first day as we will spend the first weeks of school completing assignments based upon these two novels. The attached assignments should be completed and turned in the first day of class. This assignment requires each student to complete a Reading Response Journal and Collage for both books.

In addition to the summer reading program, students are expected to pass a benchmark test given at the beginning of the course to assess reading, grammar, revision, and writing abilities. A poor showing on this benchmark may result in transfer to a regular English class. Honors and AP coursework is challenging and time-consuming and remediation in basic skills is not part of the Honors curriculum.

We look forward to an exciting and rewarding year. See you in the fall.

Sincerely,

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Summer Reading Assignment for Honors English I

Step 1 – Read and Annotate the novels

Step 2 – Reader Response Journals

Step 3 - Collages

Step 1

As you read *The Book Thief* and *Night*, you should annotate important information. I have attached a sheet from College Board that should help if you have never used this strategy before. In addition, here is the website: http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/197454.html

How and Why to Annotate a Book

by Nick Otten, Clayton High School, Clayton, Missouri

Note-Taking vs. Annotation

Most serious readers take notes of some kind when they are carefully considering a text, but many readers are too casual about their note-taking. Later they realize they have taken notes that are incomplete or too random, and then they laboriously start over, **re-notating** an earlier reading. Others take notes only when cramming for a test, which is often merely "better than nothing." Students can easily improve the depth of their reading and extend their understanding over long periods of time by developing a systematic form of annotating. Such a system is not necessarily difficult and can be completely personal and exceptionally useful.

First, what is the difference between **annotating** and "taking notes"? For some people, the difference is nonexistent or negligible, but in this instance I am referring to a way of making notes directly onto a text such as a book, a handout, or another type of publication. The advantage of having one annotated text instead of a set of note papers **plus** a text should be clear enough: all the information is together and inseparable, with notes very close to the text for easier understanding, and with fewer pieces to keep organized.

What the reader gets from annotating is a deeper initial reading and an understanding of the text that lasts. You can deliberately engage the author in conversation and questions, maybe stopping to argue, pay a compliment, or clarify an important issue—much like having a teacher or storyteller with you in the room. If and when you come back to the book, that initial interchange is recorded for you, making an excellent and entirely personal study tool.

Below are instructions adapted from a handout that I have used for years with my high school honors students as well as graduate students.

Criteria for Successful Annotation

Using your annotated copy of the book six weeks after your first reading, you can recall the key information in the book with reasonable thoroughness in a 15- to 30-minute review of your notes and the text.

Why Annotate?

Annotate any text that you must know well, in detail, and from which you might need to produce evidence that supports your knowledge or reading, such as a book on which you will be tested.

Don't assume that you must annotate when you read for pleasure; if you're relaxing with a book, well, relax. Still, some people—let's call them "not-abnormal"—actually annotate for pleasure.

Don't annotate other people's property, which is almost always selfish, often destructive, rude, and possibly illegal. For a book that doesn't belong to you, use adhesive notes for your comments, removing them before you return the text.

Don't annotate your own book if it has intrinsic value as an art object or a rarity. Consider doing what teachers do: buy an inexpensive copy of the text for class.

Tools: Highlighter, Pencil, and Your Own Text

1. Yellow Highlighter

A yellow highlighter allows you to mark exactly what you are interested in. Equally important, the yellow line emphasizes

without interfering. Before highlighters, I drew lines under important spots in texts, but underlining is laborious and often distracting. Highlighters in blue and pink and fluorescent colors are even more distracting. The idea is to see the important text more clearly, not give your eyes a psychedelic exercise.

While you read, highlight whatever seems to be key information. At first, you will probably highlight too little or too much; with experience, you will choose more effectively which material to highlight.

(Choose the following link to view highlighting on sample pages from *Walden*.)

[Figure 1: Walden, pp. 212-213 \(.pdf/1.6MB\)](#)

2. Pencil

A pencil is better than a pen because you can make changes. Even geniuses make mistakes, temporary comments, and incomplete notes.

While you read, use marginalia—marginal notes—to mark key material. Marginalia can include check marks, question marks, stars, arrows, brackets, and written words and phrases. Create your own system for marking what is important, interesting, quotable, questionable, and so forth.

3. Your Text

Inside the front cover of your book, keep an orderly, legible list of "key information" with page references. Key information in a novel might include themes; passages that relate to the book's title; characters' names; salient quotes; important scenes, passages, and chapters; and maybe key definitions or vocabulary. Remember that key information will vary according to genre and the reader's purpose, so make your own good plan.

(Choose the following link to view the inside cover of *Walden* with sample handwritten notes.)

[Figure 2: Walden, inside front cover \(.pdf/844KB\)](#)

As you read, section by section, chapter by chapter, **consider doing the following, if useful or necessary:**

At the end of each chapter or section, **briefly** summarize the material. Title each chapter or section as soon as you finish it, especially if the text does not provide headings for chapters or sections. Make a list of vocabulary words on a back page or the inside back cover. Possible ideas for lists include the author's special jargon and new, unknown, or otherwise interesting words.

Just how idiosyncratic and useful can annotating be? A good example is in William Gilbert's *De Magnete, Magneticisque Corporibus, et de Magno Magnete Tellure* (On the Magnet, Magnetic Bodies, and the Great Magnet the Earth), one of the seminal works of the Renaissance, published in the year 1600. Gilbert was the personal physician of Queen Elizabeth I and has been called the father of experimental science in England. Robert B. Downs, in *Famous Books Since 1492*, writes that in *De Magnete*, Gilbert annotated the text prior to publication by putting stars of varying sizes in the margins to indicate the relative importance of the discoveries described. Gilbert also included in the original edition a glossary of new scientific terms that he invented.

Okay, a self-annotated book on magnetism by a celebrity doctor from the time of Shakespeare, with variable-size stars in the margins and a list (in the back) of his own new vocabulary words that changed science as we know it—that's useful idiosyncrasy.

References

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*. New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1960.

Nick Otten has taught for nearly 40 years—the last 20 at Clayton High School—specializing in American literature, creative writing, and student publication. He has also been adjunct professor at Webster University in St. Louis for 30 years, specializing in teacher training in the Master of Arts in Teaching graduate program. He has published widely on reading, written an editorial column in English Journal, and presented workshops for teachers in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and China.

Step 2:

Create a Reading Response Journal for both *The Book Thief* and *Night*.

As you read the novels, collect a series of meaningful quotations throughout. Add them to your reader response journal. By splitting a paper in half, you will choose a significant quote for the left hand side of the paper; and, demonstrating your understanding of the elements listed below, you will label them according to the insight you gained from that quote. On the right hand side, you will provide commentary on this.

Use the template provided to set up a journal of specific concrete details and commentary. You can do this in a google document or on notebook paper. Make sure that you use the same type of template as seen on the next page.

1. **Plot** (setting, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, and or resolution)
2. **Characterization** (personality, thoughts, emotions, values, growth and development)
3. **Internal and external conflicts** (character choices and decisions as well as outside struggles)
4. **Symbolism and/or themes** (reoccurring ideas or concepts: the role of education/pusuit of knowledge, identity, individualism, fear, light, darkness, love friendship, loyalty)
5. **Literary devices and figurative language** (simile, metaphor, imagery, perosnificaiton, repetition, foreshadowing, etc.)

Your Reading Response Journal should contain at least 10 concrete details (quotes) and 10 commentary paragraphs.

What is a concrete detail?

A concrete detail is textual evidence taken directly from the text. Please make sure to use quotation marks as well as a parenthetical citation that includes author name and page number (this goes outside of the quotation followed by a period). Each concrete detail included must address one or a mixture of the five elements (plot, characterization, conflict, symbolism, or literary devices)

What is commentary? A commentary is a unique reflection, interpretation, insight, inference, personal response, analysis, or evaluation of the concrete detail. *Remember that a commentary comes from YOU. Commentary must include *at least* three sentences.

Sample -

Reading Response Journal for Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*

Concrete Detail (Quotations)	Commentary (From Me)
<p>Category : <u>Plot, Conflict, and Characterization</u></p> <p>"No roads, no trails, no clearings. Just the lakes, and it came to him that he would have to use a lake for landing. If he went down into the trees he was certain to die" (Paulsen 23).</p>	<p>It is unimaginable to understand the gravity of the situation as it unfolds. I truly believe I would panic, yet he's able to maintain his composure and continue flying the plane. This scenario says quite a bit about how people deal with a crisis and what it means to have strength.</p> <p><i>This entry demonstrates a reaction to the text.</i></p>
<p>Category : <u>Literary Devices</u></p> <p>"Now, with the thought of the burger, the emptiness roared at him. He could not believe the hunger, had never felt this way. The lake water had filled his stomach, but left it hungry" (Paulsen 48).</p>	<p>The author uses personification here, and I think it is incredibly odd how Brian's stomach appears to be driving his behavior. I have definitely been hungry before, but not on this level, which makes me feel extremely fortunate in life. Is he going to start eating poisonous things as a result of his hunger?</p> <p><i>This entry demonstrates a reaction to the text mixed with questioning.</i></p>

